Contact Information and Frequently Asked Questions

Contact Information

Please contact us with any scientific integrity concerns. While it is not necessary that you identify yourself, if you do we are better able to address your concerns and update you on our progress.

Please remember that electronic communications are not confidential.

If confidentiality is a concern, your most secure methods of bringing something to our attention are U.S. mail, intra-Agency mail, the Inspector General Hotline, and by telephone if your number is not displayed.

U.S. Mail:

Francesca T. Grifo, Ph.D.
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Mail Code 8105R
Washington, DC 20460

Office of the Inspector General:

Inspector General Hotline

Contact EPA Scientifc Integrity Offical

Telephone: 202-564-1687

If you wish to contact the Scientific Integrity Official about any other issue or to report an allegation with your name included:

- Email: Scientific Integrity (Scientific_Integrity@epa.gov)
- Refer to Reporting an Allegation
- Email: Francesca T. Grifo, Ph.D. (grifo.francesca@epa.gov)
- Phone: (202) 564-1687
- Office Hours: Wednesday 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Please be advised, none of these methods assure your confidentiality or anonymity.

Send Scientific Integrity Comments or Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Why is scientific integrity important to the EPA?**
   Science is the backbone of the EPA's decision-making. The agency's ability to pursue its mission to protect human health and the environment depends upon the integrity of the science on which it relies.
   The environmental policies, decisions, guidance and regulations that impact the lives of all Americans every day must be grounded, at the most fundamental level, in sound, high quality science.
   When dealing with science, it is the responsibility of every EPA employee to conduct, utilize and communicate science with honesty, integrity and transparency, both within and outside the Agency.
2. **What are the Principles of Scientific Integrity?**
   The Agency has long fostered a culture of scientific integrity through its Principles of Scientific Integrity, developed in 1999:
   EPA employees, whatever their grade level, job or duties must:Consistent with these Principles, the Agency's Scientific Integrity Policy reaffirms the expectation that all Agency employees, including scientists, managers and political appointees, regardless of grade level, position or duties, uphold these principles.
   - Ensure that the Agency's scientific work is of the highest quality, free from political interference or personal motivations.
   - Represent his/her own work fairly and accurately.
   - Appropriately characterize, convey and acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others.
   - Avoid conflicts of interest and ensure impartiality.
   - Be cognizant of and understand the specific programmatic statutes that guide their work.
   - Welcome differing views and opinions on scientific and technical matters as a legitimate and necessary part of the scientific process.
   - Accept the affirmative responsibility to report any breach of the Scientific Integrity Policy.
3. **What are the roles and responsibilities of the EPA's Scientific Integrity Committee?**
   The EPA's Scientific Integrity Committee:
   - Provides leadership for the Agency on scientific integrity.

- Implements the Scientific Integrity Policy across the Agency in a consistent manner.
- Promotes Agency compliance with the policy, including safeguarding against and mechanisms to ensure accountability for, any alteration or manipulation of scientific data by managers and other Agency leadership.
- Addresses Scientific Integrity Policy concerns, updates and amendments.

4. **What does scientific misconduct include?**
   Scientific misconduct includes fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing or reviewing scientific and research activities, or in the publication or reporting of these activities.
   Scientific misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.
5. **What policies and procedures does the EPA have in place to protect against scientific misconduct?**
   The EPA has in place clearly articulated policies and procedures protecting against scientific misconduct by all Agency employees, including managers and other Agency leadership, which are summarized in the following document:
   - EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy
   - Policy and Procedures for Addressing Research Misconduct (EPA Order 3120.5) provides policy and procedures on reporting, procedures, investigations and adjudication of research misconduct by the EPA's employees, contractors and recipients of assistance agreements.

Frequently Asked Questions about EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy

1. **Why was EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy developed?**
   On March 9, 2009, President Obama issued an executive memorandum that articulated the need for sound science to inform and guide agency decisions.
   In response, in 2010, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) provided foundational principles and specific expectations for scientific integrity in the Federal government. In particular, OSTP asked the Federal agencies to develop scientific integrity policies that included four areas:
   - Scientific integrity in government
   - Public communications
   - Use of Federal Advisory Committees
   - Professional development of government scientists and engineers

In February 2012, EPA enacted a new Scientific Integrity Policy that built on the Agency's long history of scientific safeguards and further ensures that sound science drives EPA decision making. The draft policy was open for public comment and the final policy incorporated stakeholder input from:

- The EPA Science and Technology Policy Council
- OSTP
- The public
- Agency scientists

2. **What are the goals of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy?**
   The goals of the Policy are to:
   - Ensure that the environmental policies, decisions, guidance and regulations that impact the lives of all Americans every day are grounded, at a most fundamental level, in sound, high quality science
   - Enhance the transparency within Agency scientific processes
   - Ensure that scientific research and results are presented openly and with integrity, accuracy and timeliness
   - Ensure the consistent use of peer review and Federal Advisory Committees
   - Promote the professional development of the Agency's scientists, engineers and other technical staff
3. **To whom does EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy apply?**
   All employees, including scientists, managers and political appointees, are required to follow the Policy when:
   - Engaging in, supervising, managing or influencing scientific activities
   - Communicating information in an official capacity about Agency scientific activities
   - Utilizing scientific information in making Agency policy and management decisions

   In addition, all contractors, grantees, collaborators and student volunteers of the Agency who engage in scientific activities are expected to uphold the standards established by the Policy and may be required to do so as part of their respective agreements with the EPA.
4. **What is the focus of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy?**
   To promote scientific integrity throughout the Agency, EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy addresses four specific areas:
   - The culture of scientific integrity at the EPA
   - Release of scientific information to the public
   - The use of peer review and Federal Advisory Committees
   - Professional development of government scientist

LAST UPDATED ON NOVEMBER 24, 2020